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Draft:Role of the Sri Lankan Home Guards in the Sri Lankan Civil War

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This is not formatted as an article - it is mainly a list of events with no context plus extensive quotes. The quotes are far too long and need replacing with fewer, shorter, quotes backed up by a range of reliable sources.

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This draft has been resubmitted and is currently awaiting re-review.

- **Comment:** I have provided the following clarifications and justifications regarding the draft:

  * **Historical Significance:** The topic holds clear historical significance. Applying overly restrictive criteria may inadvertently limit public access to important and underrepresented aspects of history.

  * **Source Quality:** While testimony excerpts have been shortened, their inclusion remains crucial. These first-hand accounts from survivors and eyewitnesses provide direct historical insight and serve as valuable primary sources that enrich the documented narrative.

  * **Citation Density:** The article demonstrates strong sourcing, with a high number of citations relative to its length. This reflects a clear effort toward verifiability and compliance with sourcing guidelines. Similar historical entries with fewer citations and less depth have been accepted, indicating an established precedent for inclusion when source quality is high.

  * **Neutral Intent:** The article is not written to promote a particular viewpoint but to present verifiable, well-sourced information in line with Wikipedia's mission to make knowledge freely available. The content contributes to broader historical understanding and supports the platform's role as a public educational resource.

  * **Community Collaboration:** Endorsing the article would allow for ongoing community engagement and refinement. Rejecting it at this point would prematurely halt the collaborative process and limit opportunities for constructive improvement.

  > ***Note from RajaRajaC to Reviewer: Since the last review, I've gone through the whole article a few times. I added more background info and shortened all of the quotes as much as I can, but kept the important parts since the survivor and eyewitness accounts give useful historical insight. I also added a table showing the attacks in order, and included a section on what happened to the Home Guard Service after the Sri Lankan Civil War. There's now some explanation of which massacres were carried out as revenge for the Kattankudy attack. I added images to help with context, improved the formatting, split the content into sections, and used a variety of reliable sources.***

  User:RajaRajaC (talk) 08:04, 28 September 2025 (UTC)

Background

The Home Guards in Sri Lanka were local auxiliary units raised to protect Muslim villages[1] in areas affected by communal and insurgent violence. The Home Guard system itself traces its origins to the early 1980s and was formalised into the National Home Guard Service in the mid-1980s under the Mobilisation and Supplementary Forces Act, No. 40 of 1985, which creates the legal framework for establishing and administering supplementary forces, reserves and other civil defence formations.[2][3][4] Distinct Muslim Home Guard units were later raised during 1990 in response to a wave of attacks on Muslim communities along the east coast; these units operated as lightly armed, village-based defence detachments often under local police oversight.

In 2006, the Home Guard system underwent a major reorganisation. Through a government gazette No. 1462/20 of 13 September 2006, the Home Guard Service was reorganised as the Civil Security Department (CSD) and placed within the Ministry of Defence, a move designed to regularise training, command structures and pay for the auxiliary force and to integrate it more closely with national security institutions.[5][1][2][6]

[Image Placeholder]

The Muslim Home Guards were mainly stationed where tensions were rising, concentrating in areas where different groups coexisted or where control was constantly challenged. This situates the role of the Home Guards within the wider context of the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983 - 2009) which was marked by widespread violence, with numerous massacres targeting Tamil civilians. [7] These tragic

events are part of a larger history of ethnic conflict between the Tamil minority and the Sinhala majority, exacerbated by the rise of the Tamil Tigers (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE), a separatist group seeking autonomy.[8][9] The following sections outline some of the most significant massacres, providing a clearer picture of the brutality faced by the Tamil community during the war.

Despite the severity and scale of the documented massacres involving Sri Lankan Home Guards, no investigations into the Massacres have ever been undertaken to hold the perpetrators accountable.[10][11] Neither the Sri Lankan state nor its judicial system has pursued legal proceedings against members of the Home Guards alleged to have participated in attacks on Tamil civilians. [9] This absence of accountability reflects a broader pattern of impunity that has long characterized Sri Lanka's approach to wartime abuses, particularly those committed by actors aligned with the state.

The Sri Lankan Home Guards operated with official support, including arms and training provided by the Sri Lankan military, and frequently acted in coordination with state forces. [1] [12] This collaboration contributed to a series of massacres and systematic attacks on Tamil villages, particularly in the eastern districts; namely Trincomalee, Amparai, Batticaloa. Similar patterns of violence also emerged in Mullaitivu, in the Northern Province, also witnessed such violence where interethnic tensions between Tamils and Muslims had already been exacerbated by the war. [1]

Attacks in Chronological Order

Attack	Date	Location	Death Toll	Injuries, Vulnerable Victims & Property Damages	Perpetrators	References
Massacre of 18 Tamil fishermen	9 December 1984	Mullaitivu	18		Sri Lankan Home Guards	[13]
Othiyamalai massacre	2 December 1984	Othiyamalai, Mullaitivu	32		Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[14][15][16][17]
1985 Trincomalee massacres	May – September 1985	Several places in Trincomalee	280+		Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards & Sri Lankan Navy	[18][19][20]
Murugapuri massacre	8 September 1985	Murugapuri Trincomalee	3		Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[21]
Nilaveli massacre	16 September 1985	Nilaveli, Trincomalee	40		Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[22][23]
Kalvettu massacre	20 September 1985	Kalvettu, Ampara	15	10 injured	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[24]
Anpuvalipuram Rd shooting	10 December 1985	Anpuvalipuram, Trincomalee	0	2 Tamil children injured and hospitalized	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[25]
Rape and murder of 2 Tamil women in Muthur	25 December 1985	Muthur, Trincomalee	2	2 women raped	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[26]
Akkaraipattu massacre	19 February 1986	Akkaraipattu, Amparai	80	5 women raped	Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[27][28][29][30]
Seruvila massacre	12 June 1986	Seruvila, Trincomalee	21	2 aid workers Injured	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[31][32]

1986 Thambalakamam massacre	28 June 1986	Thambalakamam, Trincomalee	34		Sri Lankan Home Guards	[33][34]
Mollipothana massacre	10 July 1986	Mollipothana, Trincomalee	11		Sri Lankan Home Guards	[35]
Sammanthurai massacre	10 June 1990	Sammanthurai, Amparai	37		Sri Lankan Home Guards	[36]
Kalmunai massacre that occurred on July 10, 1990 (Note: There are 6 Separate Instances of Kalmunai massacre from (1) 1985, (1) 1985, (4) 1990 so the Date is required in this field to Distinguish)	10 July 1990	Kalmunai, Amparai	31		Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[37]
Xavierpuram massacre	7 August 1990	Alikampai, Amparai	7	1 disappeared, 12 badly injured; houses, church and school burned	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[38][39]
Veeramunai Massacres	20 June 1990 – 15 August 1990	Veeramunai, Amparai	250+	2,000 homes and a Hindu temple set on fire	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[40][41]
Tiraikerny massacre	6 August 1990	Tiraikerny, Amparai	54+	Victims included women and children	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[42][43]
(Rev Fr. Eugene John Hebert - **American**) and His Tamil Driver	15 August 1990	Eravur, Batticaloa	2		Sri Lankan Home Guards with the assistance of Sri Lankan Army	[44][45][46][47][48]
Eastern University massacre	5 September 1990	Vantharumulai, Batticaloa	158		Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[49][50][51]
Sathurukondan Massacre	9 September 1990	Sathurukondan, Batticaloa	205	5 infants, 42 children below the age of 10, 9 pregnant women and 28 seniors that were over 68 were victims of this attack	Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[49][52][53][54][55][56]

Savukkadi massacre	20 September 1990	Savukkadi, Batticaloa	33	10 children and an infant were burnt to death.	Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[57][58]
Thalavai massacre	20 September 1990	Thalavai, Batticaloa	14		Sri Lankan Army with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards	[58][59]
1990 Puthukkudiyiruppu massacre	21 September 1990	Puthukkudiyiruppu, Mullaitivu	17	Victims included women and children. Serious injury of 27 others	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[60][61]
1990 Valaichchenai massacre	22 December 1990	Valaichchenai, Batticaloa	9		Sri Lankan Home Guards	[62]
1991 Eravur massacre	20 February 1991	Eravur, Batticaloa	6	25 seriously wounded injured	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[63][64]
Polonnaruwa Massacres	April, 30 1992	Muthugal and Karapola	89+	13 children under the age of 10 were victims of this attack	Sri Lankan Home Guards	[65][66][67][68]
4th Colony village massacre	24 September 1997	Amparai	8-15		Sri Lankan Home Guards	[69]
1998 Tampalakamam massacre	1 February 1998	Tampalakamam, Trincomalee	8		Sri Lankan Home Guards & Sri Lankan Police	[70][71]

The table above lists the 28 documented attacks on Civilians with the involvement of Home Guards. Notably, six of these massacres (excluding the attack on Rev Fr. Eugene John Hebert and his Tamil Driver) occurring between August and September 1990 appear to have been carried out as retaliatory responses to the Kattankudy Mosque Massacre, which took place on 3 August 1990 and was allegedly perpetrated by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).[72] Before the Kattankudy Mosque Massacre, there were 16 recorded incidents involving Home Guards in civilian attacks.

While intelligence reports and accusations exist, no public, transparent, or judicial investigation led to conclusively identify the perpetrators of the Kattankudy Massacre. [73][74] According to UTHR, local testimonies collected in their Report 5, Chapter 2 ("A Bloody Stalemate") [75] reveal that while there was widespread belief in LTTE involvement, but there was also continued ambiguity among local residents about who was actually responsible for the attack. A civilian named "Ranjith Appa" had been reportedly involved in the massacre, but whether he acted as a guide or played a leading role is unclear.[75] UTHR also observed that "no thought was given to concealment," a detail interpreted by some as suggesting the attack may not have been centrally planned, or that the LTTE's chain of command was loose in this instance.

In an effort to prevent communal riots and consolidate territorial dominance, the LTTE expelled Muslims from the Northern Province in October 1990.[76] Following the expulsion of Muslims from the Northern Province by the LTTE, a mass displacement that further strained Tamil-Muslim relations, only five additional massacres involving Muslim Home Guards were documented over the span of an eight-year period. This reduction in frequency may be attributed to the changes in territorial control.

The massacres carried out by Home Guards were predominantly concentrated in the eastern districts; namely Trincomalee, Amparai and Batticaloa. These 3 districts held significant economic value due to their agricultural productivity and access to coastal trade routes. [1] Alongside these eastern districts, Mullaitivu in the Northern Province also experienced significant violence, as it was a critical stronghold for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), making it a key target in the broader military efforts to weaken the separatist movement. [1] In these regions, Tamils lived there as minorities among Muslims combined with their strategic importance, made them focal points for targeted violence by the Home Guards, who operated in coordination with state forces to destabilize and damage relationships between the two communities in order to assert control over the contested territories.[9]

Post-May 2009: End of Sri Lankan Civil War

The images presented on AFP Fact Check Website (https://factcheck.afp.com/no-these-photos-do-not-show-recent-weapons-handover-muslim-groups-sri-lanka) were released as a press release for when Muslim militant groups in the Eastern Province handed over their weapons following the Sri Lankan government-declared amnesty.[77][78] The event took place at Kattankudy Jumma Meera Mosque on July 4, 2009 afternoon 3:00 p.m, in the presence of the Eastern Deputy Inspector General of Police (D.I.G.) Edison Gunatilake and Provincial Minister M.L.A.M. Hisbullah. [79]

According to multiple news reports related to this event, the Sri Lankan Army and Police intensified its security operations in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province during this time to capture three high-profile individuals identified as Police Faiz, Muthur Nizam, and Ruhul Haq; figures who are believed to have played a critical role in the radicalization and recruitment of Muslim youth in the region.[79][77]

By July 4, 2009, the authorities had already picked up seven suspects, in a series of precision raids led by special police units in Kattankudy and Eravur.[79] One of those raids hit a jihadi hideout where they found two suspects and extensive weapons caches including seven T-56 rifles, SMG weapons, anti-personnel mines, claymore mines, detonators and high frequency communication sets.[79][77] It was a clear sign of how deeply armed and organized these groups were.

Security officials confirmed that investigations were underway to establish whether the individuals in question maintained affiliations with international extremist networks such as al-Qaeda, as well as identifying potential sources of external funding that may have supported their operations.[77]

Extensively reported Massacres involving Sri Lankan Home Guards

Among the many incidents of violence during the Sri Lankan Civil War, certain massacres involving Sri Lankan Home Guards are remembered for their scale, brutality, and for how well they were documented. They are widely remembered within the Tamil community and continue to be referenced in discussions on wartime accountability and justice. The following cases represent some of the most well-known and thoroughly recorded massacres attributed to the collaboration between Sri Lankan military forces and Sri Lankan Home Guards, offering critical insight into the nature of targeted violence during the conflict.

Extensively reported Massacres involving Sri Lankan Home Guards

(Sorted from Highest to Lowest Casualties)

(June 20 – August 15, **1990**) **Veeramunai Massacre, Amparai – 250 Tamil civilians killed.** *2,000 homes and a Hindu temple set on fire* by Sri Lankan forces and Sri Lankan Home Guards.

(Sept 9, **1990**) **Sathurukondan Massacre, Batticaloa – 184 Tamils killed** by the Sri Lankan Army and Sri Lankan Home Guards. *5 infants, 42 children* below the age of 10, *9 pregnant women and 28 seniors that were 65 and over were victims of this attack.*

(Sept 5, **1990**) **Eastern University Refugee Massacre – 158 Tamil refugees killed** by Sri Lankan forces and Sri Lankan Home Guards. **158 Tamils** that were *sheltering there were rounded up and arrested* then never seen again.

(Feb 19, **1986**) **Akkaraipattu massacre** – Sri Lankan armed forces assisted by Sri Lankan Home Guards *attacked the village* of **Udumbankulam in the Akkaraipattu** division and shot dead at least **80 Tamil farm workers at the paddy fields.**

(Sept 20, **1990**) **In Savukkadi Massacres in Batticaloa, Sri Lankan Army and Sri Lankan Home Guards killed 33 Tamils.** *26 Tamil villagers,* including *ten children and an infant, were burnt to death* and buried in two ditches. Soldiers also *shot at fishermen in the waters* off the village, **killing 7.**

(Sept 20, **1990**) Sri Lankan Home Guards woke people from their homes in **Thalavai Eravur**, *took them to a forest* under the pretext that *the army commander wanted to meet them,* and then **murdered 14 Tamils.**

(Aug 6, **1990**) **Tirukkerny massacre in Amparai – At least 54 Tamils,** including *women and children,* were killed by Sri Lankan Home Guards. Muslim mobs stormed the village, setting *homes ablaze;* more than *150 men, armed with the Trident, the spear,* and the tools taken away from the Temple *attacked Tamils that sought refuge* there.

(April 30, **1992**) **In Muthugal Polonnaruwa** Massacres. Sri Lankan Home Guards killed **51 Tamils.** *including 13 children under the age of 10.* **In Karapola, 18 Tamils were killed.** In total, **89 Tamils** were murdered.

(Dec 2, **1984**) **Othiyamalai Massacre, Mullaitivu – 32 Tamils killed** by Sri Lankan Army and Sri Lankan Home Guards. Victims were *stripped naked and tied up. 27 men were shot* and killed on the spot. *5 had been detained, then murdered* at a later date.

(Sept 21, **1990**) Sri Lankan Home Guards attacked the **Puthukkudiyiruppu village, in Mullaitivu** where *44 Tamils, including women and children,* were rounded up, dragged to the beach, and *attacked with knives and swords,* leading to the **deaths of 17 civilians** and the *serious injury of 27 others.*

Appendix 2: Bullet Points Version of the Main Body with Key facts and Dates Emphasized

Othiyamalai Massacre

Predating the major massacres of the 1990s, one of the earliest documented Massacres involving Sri Lankan Home Guards took place on December 2, 1984, in the village of Othiyamalai in Mullaitivu. In this massacre 32 Tamils were killed. This massacre had been carried out by Sri Lankan Army forces and Sri Lankan Home Guards.[80] The victims were stripped, tied up, and shot, with 27 men killed on the spot. [81] Five others were detained and executed later. [82][83][84]

Veeramunai Massacre

The events in Othiyamalai marked the beginning of a troubling alliance between state forces and auxiliary groups, a dynamic that would contribute to even more widespread atrocities in the years ahead. A very clear example was the Veeramunai Massacre in 1990. The Veeramunai Massacre, which occurred between June 20 - August 15 in 1990 in Veeramunai village of the Amparai district, is among the most devastating incidents in the series of attacks on Tamil civilians.[85] During this period, over 250 Tamil civilians were killed, and more than 2,000 homes were destroyed. In addition, a Hindu temple was set ablaze by Muslim Home Guards. The attack was part of a broader pattern of retaliation by the Sri Lankan government forces aimed at Tamil villages, which were suspected of

supporting the Tamil Tigers. [86] The scale and coordination of the violence suggested a premeditated strategy that extended beyond conventional military engagement.[87] Notably, this was not the first time Veeramunai had suffered such violence; a similar massacre occurred in 1954[40], indicating a historical pattern of conflict involving the Tamil population in the area.

Akkaraipattu Massacre

In addition to these major incidents, earlier massacres demonstrated similar patterns of coordinated violence. One such case is the Akkaraipattu Massacre, which took place on 19 February 1986 and was carried out by Sri Lankan forces, with the assistance of Sri Lankan Home Guards. They attacked the village of Udumbankulam in the Akkaraipattu division, killing at least 80 Tamil farm workers.[27] Five Tamil woman complained of being raped in the paddy fields during the assault.[30] The attack occurred in the paddy fields, where the workers were performing their daily tasks. [88] The victims were shot dead, and many were left in the open fields. [29]

Tiraikerny Massacre

In the lead-up to the major wave of September massacres on August 6, 1990, the Muslim Home Guards attacked the village of Tiraikerny in Amparai, killing at least 54 Tamils, including women and children.[89] The attackers stormed the village, setting homes on fire, and employed a variety of weapons, including tridents, spears, and temple tools, in their assault. [90] The incident is one of many attacks during the period of heightened ethnic violence between Tamils and Muslims in the region.[91]

Polonnaruwa Massacres

Nearly two years later, following the expulsion of Muslims from the Northern Province by the LTTE, the Polonnaruwa Massacres (in Muthugal and the surrounding villages) that occurred on April 30, 1992 saw 51 Tamils killed by Home Guards, including 13 children under the age of 10.[65] [67] Another 38 Tamils were killed in Karapola in Polonnaruwa Massacres on the same day, bringing the total to 89. These massacres were part of a larger series of retaliatory attacks by Home Guards against Tamil civilians. [68]

The 1990s Black September Massacres

Sathurukondan Massacre

The following events are collectively referred to as Black September by Sri Lankan Tamils, a period marked by a series of civilian massacres in the 1990s following the Kattankudy Massacre on Sri Lankan Muslims. [92][93][58][94] The Sathurukondan Massacre, carried out on 9 September 1990 in Batticaloa by the Sri Lankan Army, supported by Muslim Home Guards, resulted in the killings of 184 Tamils. [95] Among the victims were five infants, 42 children under the age of 10, and 28 seniors.[96] The brutality of this attack exemplified the indiscriminate nature of the violence that targeted Tamil civilians, regardless of age or gender. [97] The massacre, while framed as part of the government's strategy to combat the Tamil Tigers, demonstrated a larger pattern of violence that blurred the lines between combatants and civilians. [98] [94]

Eastern University Massacre

A few days earlier, on 5 September 1990, an incident at Eastern University campus further highlighted the vulnerability of displaced populations, when 158 Tamil refugees were killed at the Eastern University campus, where they had sought shelter from ongoing violence.[99] [100] The refugees, who had sought sanctuary at the university, were rounded up and arrested by Sri Lankan forces and Muslim Home Guards. [101] [102] They were then executed. None of these victims were never seen again, and their bodies were never recovered.[103] The lack of accountability for this massacre reflects a broader issue of impunity that plagued many attacks against Tamil civilians.[104][105][106][107]

Savukkadi Massacre

The massacre at Eastern University was soon followed by another atrocity only two weeks later. On September 20, 1990, the Sri Lankan Army and Muslim Home Guards stationed in Batticaloa, Savukkadi killed 33 Tamils in a series of coordinated attacks. [58] Among the victims were 26 villagers, including ten children and an infant, who were burned alive and buried in ditches. [99][57] Additionally, Soldiers also targeted fishermen off the coast, as a result 7 fishermen were shot dead while at sea. [58]

Thalaivai Massacre

On the same day as the Savukkadi attacks (September 20, 1990), Muslim Home Guards woke the Tamil villagers of Thalaivai, Eravur from their homes, claiming they needed to meet with an army commander. Once the victims were gathered in the forest, they were executed. [58] Fourteen Tamils were murdered in this gruesome attack.[59] This massacre highlights the deceptive tactics used by the perpetrators, who lured the victims under the guise of military meetings, only to murder them in cold blood.

1990 Puthukkudiyiruppu Massacre

Barely 24 hours after the Savukkadi and Thalaivai massacres, in the village of Puthukkudiyiruppu, Mullaitivu on September 21, 1990, 44 Tamils, including women and children, were rounded up by Muslim Home Guards, dragged to the beach, and brutally attacked with knives and swords.[60] The massacre resulted in the deaths of 17 individuals, and another 27 were seriously injured. [61]

The failure to investigate these incidents despite credible witness testimonies, human rights reports, and international attention has reinforced a culture in which state-affiliated groups operated with little fear of legal consequence. In some cases, this impunity contributed to the normalization of violence, where extrajudicial killings and reprisal attacks against civilians occurred without restraint or oversight. The unwillingness to confront state-linked violence not only undermines the rule of law but also continues to impede post-war reconciliation and justice for affected communities. The extent and nature of these abuses are further illuminated in the following section through testimonies that reveal the lived realities behind the statistics and reports.

Veeramunai Massacre, Amparai Testimonies

A resident of Ganapathipuram, who was a witness said[108][109][40]:

> *"When the army entered Malwaththa, the soldiers shot people at sight, while houses were looted and burnt. We, on hearing gunshot and seeing flames rising from burning homes, fled with our family... We reached the Veeramunai Temple... people from other villages had arrived..."*.

A resident from Veeramunai said[108][109]:

> *"We found the soldiers were creating a climate of terror. People were picked up from their homes, the road and the paddy fields. We went to the Temple that was made a refugee camp. People on their way to work were stopped and killed and burnt"*.

The operation of the army at Veeramunai was described by a mother who said [108][109]:

> *"On 20th June 1990... army vehicles drove into the Veeramunai temple, where thousands of people had taken refuge. The soldiers requested all males over the age of 15 to get in line. The soldiers entered the temple and examined whether anyone was hiding and then began picking some youths and children... The women asked them what they were trying to do. One of the officers said they were being taken for questioning... The soldiers ignored and started to leave the youths. The officer said he would order his men to shoot every man and woman. The army carried away our children. A few returned later battered and bruised, following severe torture"*.

A youth who escaped from sure death after arrest, made the following statement[108][109]:

> *"I was one among those arrested on 20th June from the Veeramunai temple. The soldiers took us to the Sammanthurai AI-Matjan Muslim School where we were beaten severely. When I was produced before him, he said "No" and I was taken aside. The people to whom he said, "Yes" were taken into another building. Of the many victims picked up on this day only around 20 returned. We learnt that half burnt human bodies were rotting at Malaikadu. Muslims carried several tractor loads of paddy husks to cover the rotting bodies and burnt them"*.

The testimony of Madasamy Kathirkamamoorthy[108][109]:

> *"An army truck had stopped. No one was in uniform... they were carrying weapons. These armed men started hitting people – they spoke in Sinhala and told me to get into the truck. There were 9 of us... Some had blood dripping. When the wives came to stop them, they hit the wives and children.*
>
> *In the truck, they took us to a big forest in Amparai. They tied our hands behind our back. They stood in front of us, loaded their machine guns and shot everyone.*
>
> *I turned to my side – my leg and arm were hit by the bullets. I have a big scar on my leg. As people tried to get up, they were again shot till they were dead on the floor. So I just laid there with my eyes shut. My leg was badly hurt. I was not even sure I had a leg. I dragged my leg and slowly walked away"*.

Sathurukondan Massacre, Batticaloa Testimonies

Speaking to TamilNet [110][94][52] in 1997, Mr K Krishnakumar, recounted what happened that day:

> *"The army had cordoned off villages before 10 a.m. Four masked men walked into the hall and selected me (K. Krishnakumar), T. Kumar, C. Sinnaththamby, and K. Jeevaratnam. Our shirts were removed... Then we were taken to the camp's back yard. We were dragged about fifty meters further, where we saw a pit about 20 ft by 5ft."*
>
> *"...I saw 25 soldiers armed with long swords and cudgels standing round the pit."*
>
> *"I was hit with a cudgel and I fell face downward. When the other three screamed the soldiers stripped them and stuffed cloth into their mouths. One by one they were taken to the edge of the pit and hacked with swords and were pushed in."*
>
> *"A soldier came up to me and slammed me against the Cashew tree, pulled out a long kris knife, and stabbed me through the chest. He then pushed me into the pit... Though I was bleeding, I didn't lose consciousness."*
>
> *"Four more men were brought there, hacked to death and were pushed in to the pit. The soldiers went again and brought two pregnant women. They were stripped naked and their breasts were sliced off. The soldiers then cut open the stomachs of these women... and pushed them into the pit."*
>
> *"Later they brought many girls butt naked... and all were raped repeatedly. Then the soldiers cut off their breasts with the swords. Three of these girls were pushed into the well. "As the area was dark, I was able to slowly crawl out while they were busy raping, killing and pushing bodies into the pit. When the soldiers left, I crawled towards the camp fence and hid in shrub jungle behind the camp. Later the soldiers brought tires and set fire to the bodies in the pit. With the help of a passer-by I went to the hospital."*

Eastern University Refugee Massacre Testimonies

The lecturers at the campus provided protection for them and hoisted a white flag in front of the University. One eyewitness account, as recorded by UTHR, reports[111]:

> *"As soon as the army went into the villages of Kondayankerny, Sungankerny and Karuvakkerny they started shooting and hacking the people to death. The soldiers were equipped with a Bulldozer... They lost no time in burying the bodies. In those three villages, they arrested forty-eight (48) people and took them to Valaichchenai main road. There they shot dead all 48 people and buried their bodies in the compound of a private land"*[111]

Following the arrest of 138 individuals, the witness himself was detained on his way home and held for nine days, during which he observed the killing of detainees inside the camp. [111] The witness further stated that:

> *"In seven days, the (Eastern University) campus was full of fifty-five thousand (55,000) refugees. On the eighth day, the army walked into the campus ignoring our white flag. Muslim Home Guards collaborating with the army also came... While he was talking to us, two empty buses came to the campus. The soldiers ordered the people to come in a line and with the help of Muslim Home Guards; they selected hundred and thirty eight (138) (subsequently revised up to 158) youths from the camp. All the parents and family members started pleading and screaming. But they were all taken to an unknown destination. Later we went to all the army camps and inquired about the whereabouts of the 138 people. But the army said that they were not aware of those people."*[111]

Thangamuthu Jayasingam, who served as the officer in charge of the Vantharumoolai refugee camp at the time, later recorded in 2015 that he had spoken to "various national and international persons" and had provided testimony before the Presidential Commission on Missing Persons in 2004. [112]

> *"I gave them the names of all the army officers who came for the operation that day and also gave the name of the Army Major General who came three days after on 8th September to the camp. I am not aware whether there had been any inquiries to this day."*[113]

Akkaraipattu massacre, Amparai Testimonies

According to the local community leaders of Akkaraipattu, the victims were threshing paddy fields when troops appeared from the nearby jungle firing into the air. The men were rounded up, tied, and taken back to the fields where they were shot. Their bodies were reportedly piled on top of a dry rice harvest and burned, with several empty ammunition cases found at the scene.[28][29]

The event was documented by journalist Humphrey Hawksley in The Guardian on February 22, 1986.[28]

The incident has been cited as an example of ethnic cleansing and systematic violence against the Tamil population in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province during that period.[28]

Tiraikerny massacre, Amparai Testimonies

Read one eye witness account, recorded by the North East Secretariat on Human Rights, below.[43][90]

> *"In the morning, on the 6th August 1990; I heard the cries of women... of my Muslim neighbour's house. I rushed to the house from which the Muslim women raised cries... The women said that their men who went to the paddy field at Alimadakadu had been cut to pieces and slain. No one knew who the killers were. I returned home... I heard people shouting... We found men, women and children moving away from their homes... They told us that they were running away from an angry mob composed of Muslims who had vowed to destroy Thiraikerny. Tamils... warned us saying "do not stay here; the mob is heavily armed according to information received from friendly Muslims". We left home with the children and took refuge in the Pillaiyar Temple.*
>
> *Soon the Muslims appeared on the road at a distance. Riotous gangsters numbering more than 150 men, armed with knives, swords, sickles and clubs... called out the Muslims to unite to fight the Tamils. People prayed for Divine intervention... As we looked up we saw... The smoke came from the burning houses of the Tamils. As the goons were approaching the Pillaiyar Temple, the people ran towards the Periyathambiran Temple and the mob followed. The people having resigned their fate watched with fear.*
>
> *The mob reached the Periyathambiran Temple premise, an armoured car, drove into the temple premise. There were six soldiers in uniform in the vehicle... They did not themselves take part in the attack. The behaviour of the soldiers gave some courage to the Tamil youths to approach the armoured car... They... sought to plead with the soldiers... to prevent any attack from the Muslim Mobs on the Tamils... The soldiers were alleged to have told... Tamils had killed Muslims and therefore the army cannot intervene. The soldiers waved their hands... and that waving of their hands was taken as a signal for the attackers to begin their assault.*
>
> *First they began desecrating the Temple... Some of the Muslims entered into the sanctum and came out with the Sacred Trident and the spear... on the ground... The Tamils were later attacked with the Trident, the spear, and the tools taken away from the Temple. The attackers first assaulted the men seated on the ground with knifes. Those who were in the rear escaped... even some of the injured ran away, but did not return alive. My husband... died there.*
>
> *The people wondered whether it was a joint attack of the Army and the Muslims... The arrival of the soldiers at the Hindu temple premises had an (positive) impact (for the Muslim mob)... As the attackers were busy... sharp reports of fire-arms were heard... The soldiers who had come over to Thiraikerny... fled in their armoured car.*
>
> *When the armoured vehicle left, the attackers too fled, crying out. 'Tigers are coming to attack us'. ...Among those killed was not only men but also women and children. A very young mother known as Vijeyaluxmy and her infant too were killed. The Special Task Force (STF) came in... They had come there firing all the way. We realized that it is their firing that drove away the soldiers and the attackers. They saw the large number that had been murdered and injured. There was blood and flesh strewn all around..."*

Polonnaruwa Massacre (Muthugal & Karapola Villages) Testimonies

According to Amnesty International Report which covered the Polonnaruwa Massacres, here an except of what happened that day: [65] [67]

More than 80 Tamil villagers of nearby Muthugal and Karapola were intentionally killed by Home Guards… in apparent retaliation for the attack on 29 April 1992; where the LTTE allegedly attacked the Muslim village of Alanchipothana… [67][68]

Some of the Sri Lankan policemen from Karapola then came with the Home Guards to Muthugal… shot and stabbed to death dozens of Tamil villagers there, and then went back to Karapola, where they allegedly killed a further 38 people. At around 9am, they returned to Muthugal and... killed until approximately 10am, when the army arrived in the village and chased them away.

Among the victims were many vulnerable people including women and children, including babies, killed while hiding... In one such episode, a woman named Sivapathy and her 3-year-old son (Sinnarasiah Thangeswaran), were shot as she tried to defend the older children with the young infant in her arms. In one house, where a large group of people had sought refuge, 8 were killed. As per the father…, his son was killed by a shot in the chest when he leaned against the door... The shot was fired by one of at least four home guards... Other survivors have substantiated this claim, and provided additional information… and shot and stabbed to death seven others, including three children aged 2, 4 and 12. [67] *Some of the eye-witnesses have been able to identify by name… responsible for the killing of their relatives.* [67]

Many people who fled from Muthugal were... found hiding in paddy fields by Home Guards from Madurangala... Amnesty International received a tip about the arrest of five men and one woman among them. There is proof that these six people were taken to the Peiris Wijayasinghe's residence at Madurangala. As per his wife, eight Home Guards arrived at their home... She affirmed they brought six prisoners, including P Packiyarajah, a distant relative and a woman from Muthugal... In an interview... she stated:[67]

> *"They asked my husband whether he knew Packiyarajah of Muthugal... My husband then said, '... they are innocent and it is out of fear that they had hidden in the paddy [rice] fields'. The Home Guards then beat my husband with rifle butts and with their hands. Soon afterwards the Karapola policemen came... and they beat all the six men, including my husband, and ordered all of them to get into a white van. They said they were taking them to the Karapola police station."* [67]

Sri Lankan Army personnel from Welikande army camp allegedly entered the area at approximately 6.30am. They are alleged to have passed through Karapola village on the way to Alanchipothana..., approximately half an hour before the Home Guards attacked Karapola.[67] The total death toll that were reported killed at Muthugal is 51, thirteen of whom are reported to be under 10 years old. A list of the names of the 51 villagers executed at Muthugal, and of 31 of the 38 killed at Karapola in these Massacres, was published by Amnesty International. [67]

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Further Reading & External Links

- A major source for the documentation of these massacres is the book Massacres of Tamils, 1956 - 2008 (https://web.archive.org/web/20250924212407/https://sangam.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/English-Massacres-of-Tamils-1956-2008.pdf), published by Manitham Publishers in 2009 (ISBN 978-81-909737-0-0). The book records 171 incidents over a 52-year period and is based on eyewitness testimonies and collected data. It was co-published by the North East Secretariat on Human Rights (NESOHR) and the Chennai-based human rights trust Manitham.

Independent reports, documentaries and texts

- Sri Lanka's Killing Fields (http://www.channel4.com/programmes/sri-lankas-killing-fields/4od) an investigative documentary by ITN/Channel 4
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Sri Lankan civil war (1983–2009)		
Origins	Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism · Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism · Sinhala Only Act · 1956 · 1958 · Vaddukoddai Resolution · 1977 · 1981 (Burning of Jaffna Library) · Black July	
Combatants	**Sri Lanka**	Army (LRRP) · Navy · Air Force · Police (Special Task Force) · Home Guards · Attacks on civilians (Assassinations)
	LTTE	Divisions · Air Tigers · Sea Tigers · Black Tigers · Attacks (in the 1970s · 1980s · 1990s · 2000s · Assassinations · Suicide bombings)
	Other militants (list)	ENDLF · ENLF · EPRLF · EROS · PLOTE · TELO
	India	Indian Peace Keeping Force
	Paramilitary groups	EPDP · TMVP
Phases	Eelam War I · Indian intervention · Eelam War II · III · IV (Eastern / Northern theatres)	
Major battles	Kokkilai · Vadamarachchi · Poomalai · Pawan · Jaffna University Helidrop · Balavegaya · 1st Elephant Pass · Pooneryn · Riviresa · 1st Mullaitivu · Weli Oya · Sath Jaya · Vavunathivu · Jayasikurui · Thandikulam–Omanthai ·	

	1st Kilinochchi · Oddusuddan · A-9 highway · 2nd Elephant Pass · Bandaranaike Airport attack · Point Pedro · Jaffna · Thoppigala · Vidattaltivu · 2nd Kilinochchi · 2nd Mullaitivu · Puthukkudiyirippu			
Major events	Air Lanka Flight 512 · Indo-Sri Lanka Accord · Expulsions from Northern province · Assassination of Lalith Athulathmudali · Assassination of Rajiv Gandhi · Assassination of Ranasinghe Premadasa · Temple of the Tooth attack · Lionair Flight 602 · Bandaranaike Airport attack · Expulsions from Colombo · 2009 suicide air raid on Colombo			
Leaders	**Sri Lanka**	Military	Army	Tissa Weeratunga · Nalin Seneviratne · Hamilton Wanasinghe · Cecil Waidyaratne · G. H. De Silva · Rohan Daluwatte · Srilal Weerasooriya · L. P. Balagalle · Shantha Kottegoda · Sarath Fonseka
			Navy	Asoka de Silva · H. A. Silva · Clancy Fernando · D. A. M. R. Samarasekara · H. C. A. C. Thisera · Daya Sandagiri · Wasantha Karannagoda
			Air Force	Dick Perera · Andibuduge Fernando · Makalandage Gunawardena · Oliver Ranasinghe · Jayalath Weerakkody · Donald Perera · Roshan Goonetileke
		Civilian		J. R. Jayewardene · Ranasinghe Premadasa · Dingiri Banda Wijetunga · Chandrika Kumaratunga · Mahinda Rajapaksa
	LTTE	Militant		Velupillai Prabhakaran · Pottu Amman · Soosai · Karuna Amman
		Political		Selvarasa Pathmanathan · Anton Balasingham · S. P. Thamilselvan
	India	Military		Harkirat Singh · Ashok K. Mehta · Kulwant Singh · Depinder Singh · Dalvir Singh · Krishnaswamy Sundarji
		Civilian		R. Venkataraman · Rajiv Gandhi · V. P. Singh · Jyotindra Nath Dixit · J. Jayalalithaa · M. Karunanidhi · Vaiko
Aftermath	Genocide (Films · NPC resolution) · LLRC · Reactions (Protests) · Remembrance Day · UN Panel on Accountability · War crimes (Chemical weapons)			
Related topics	Casualties (Assassinations · Massacres) · Child soldiers · Disappearances (Office on Missing Persons) · Human rights · Popular culture · Terrorism (Non-state · State · PTA) · Sexual violence · Sixth Amendment · Thirteenth Amendment · Women · 1988 Maldives coup attempt · 1987–1989 JVP insurrection			
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